

Vienna and Beyond: Art and Architecture in
Austria-Hungary
1873-1918

23 April 2020 - Essay Writing

What is an essay?

“A short piece of writing on a particular subject.”

- It is a formal, original text
- with a clear sense of argument
- Supported by evidence, facts
- Expressed logically



Main Topics

- General structure/outline of an essay
 - Introduction
 - Main Argumentation – divided into clear distinct sections
 - Conclusion
 - Bibliography
 - Illustrations (if relevant)

Introduction

- **Introduce** the topic briefly, by a short thematic opening, either related to the artists life, through a related object, by a historical event, by the cultural atmosphere of the period etc.
- Point out a certain **problem / questions**, related to one of the topics of the course.
- Name and explain the more important voices in **research** / or the general state of the research; What are the most important books / essays, for primary and secondary sources? What is the most influential thesis in that specific field of research?
- Provide a short summary of the points you intend to make in the essay, and also indicate what your **aim** is. This helps the reader know what to expect – and it is like providing them with a map so they can make their way through your essay

What sources do I use?

Choose:

- **Periodicals** – scholarly, academic, both printed and online
- Books – **monographs**, edited collections
- Book **reviews**
- Dissertations

Always ask, how reliable the source is:

- E.g. popular books, such as *The Da Vinci Code*
- Wikipedia entries
- Websites

What is an argument?

- An argument is a flow of reasons. It is a case presented in a logical stream, where ideas run together to support one another.
- Arguments are ideas that begin with a proposition, gather reinforcement and head toward a conclusion.
- As a writer you need to articulate your views in a clear and logical fashion and be able to convince others of your position.

Forming an argument

If you are writing an analysis that compares and contrasts multiple arguments, do not merely describe one work, then the next work, then the final work. This style—known as “block-by-block”—often leads to a lot of description but not a lot of analysis.

Instead, structure your paper in what is known as the “**point-by-point**” method. In this method, you identify points of comparison and contrast and allow those points to be the main ideas.

Conclusion

- Simply put, repeat the things stated in the introduction, but do not *only* repeat your arguments.
- Now, offer some kind of commentary *about* your argument. In other words: having been presented with various points of view / arguments: where does that leave us? Where do we stand?
- Do you have a point of view based on what you have read / the arguments you have presented? The Conclusion is where you put this.

Referencing – why?

- gives appropriate recognition to the original authors or researchers whose ideas, words and research have been used
- gives strength to your ideas by using well documented research that supports an argument
- avoids plagiarism and the subsequent university disciplinary action
- enables a reader to locate the sources of your information
- provides evidence of your wide reading.

Referencing and footnotes: Use the usual system of citation in the department, or any other of the more common international styles – but the most important thing is – once you have chosen one, stay consistent with the style!

Stanford, A BRIEF GUIDE TO WRITING IN ART HISTORY

iv. Footnotes. Citation

An editor at an important journal once explained: by simply reading the footnotes, he could determine which essays to publish and which to reject. While this may seem like choosing a lover based on a big toe, it's not as peculiar as it sounds. The footnotes document research you have quoted, paraphrased or summarized in the body of your essay as well as any ideas you've borrowed and expressed in the essay. A reader might look at your footnotes, then, and find the answer to these questions: Has this writer read the most important critics on the topic? Has the writer engaged relevant theoretical perspectives? Has the writer relied on scholarly research as compared to internet searches? Has the writer balanced primary and secondary materials?

Your footnotes reveal, in this way, what kind of researcher you are: perfunctory, multilingual, creative, interdisciplinary, reliable... By asking these questions of your own footnotes, you stand to improve both your footnotes and your essay.

*Note: You can also use the space of a footnote to provide your reader with salient additional research, as well as anecdotal or other observations that enhance the reader's understanding of the subject--even as such asides remain ancillary to the essay's structure. (For proper citation, refer to the [detailed instructions](#) in the Library Guide. Art Historians use the style established by the *Chicago Manual of Style*.)*

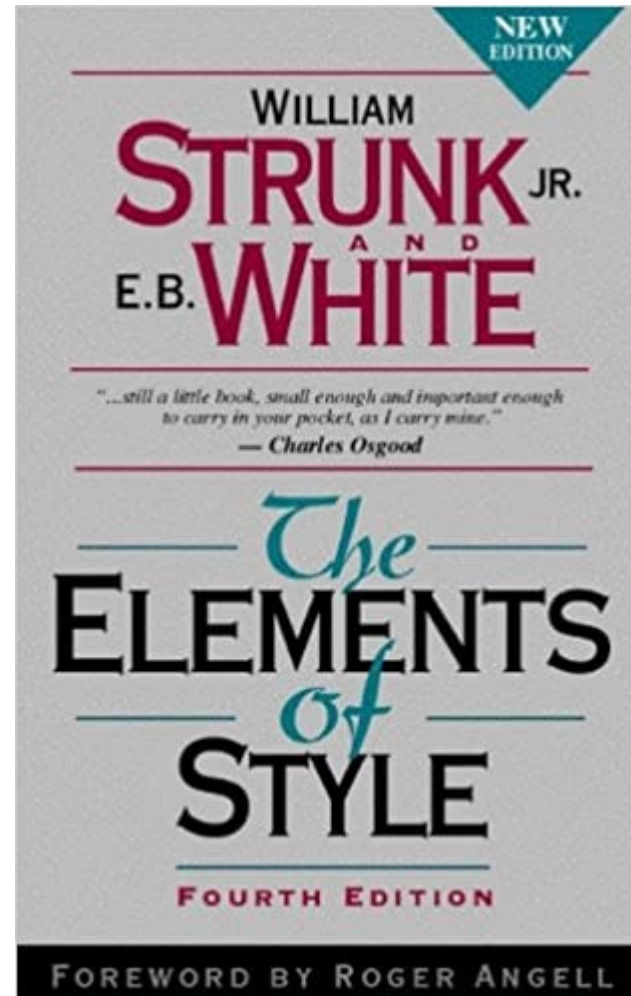
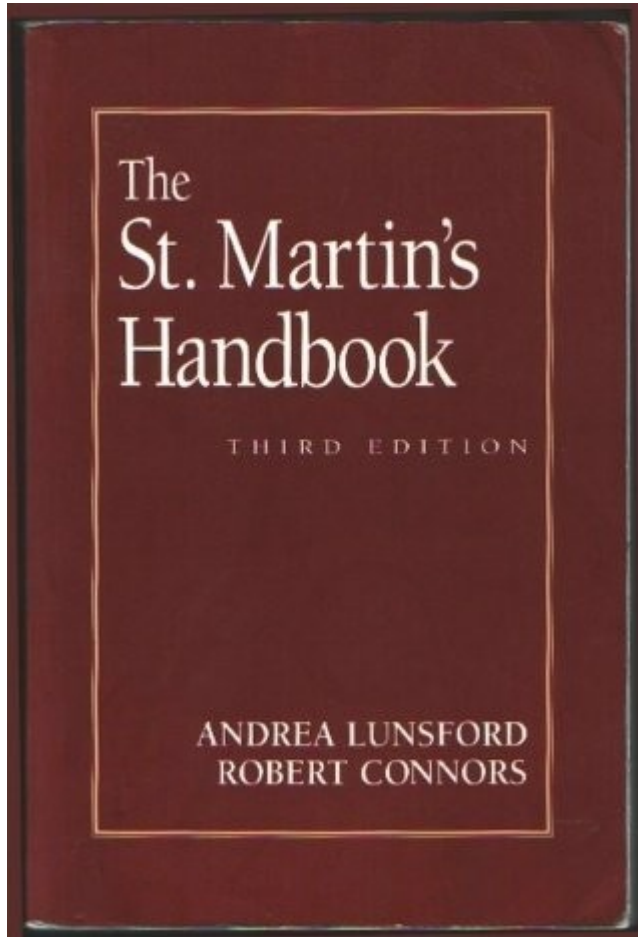
Bibliography

- The essay ends with a list of the primary and secondary sources
- List at least 10 relevant secondary sources!
- Separate the primary sources from the rest
- Only list items, you made use of in the text

Images

- Add a fully annotated list of your images at the end of the essay (if relevant)





English Language

Use one or two good writing [guides](#), and see, if you can find material that helps you improve

Look up words via [Merriam Webster](#), English is often reliant on specific phrases and/or the use of certain verbs

Use premade collections of art historical phrases, you can google them

Try to find word lists and expand your [vocabulary](#) a bit.

Find a friend for proofreading

What is academic language?

Informal Language	Academic Language
repetition of words	variety of words, more sophisticated vocabulary
sentences start with “and” and “but”	sentences start with transition words, such as “however,” “moreover,” and “in addition”
use of slang: “guy,” “cool,” and “awesome”	No slang

Before you submit

A checklist:

- Have I understood the essay question and the requirements?
- Have I expressed a clear argument and/or opinion?
- Have I used appropriate evidence to support this argument or opinion?
- Does my introduction clearly state the topic and how it will be dealt with?
- Does my conclusion refer back to the topic and state my findings based on the evidence provided?
- Are all my references complete and correct according to the appropriate style?

And finally, if you're not sure about something, ASK!

